



NAVY STUDIES LIFE RAFT VOYAGERS

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STORY AND PHOTOS BY
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PEARL HARBOR - Navy medical researchers of the Office of Naval Research's Clinical Investigation Center at Oakland Navy Regional Medical Center are presently studying the results of tests run on two Naval Reservists who spent 54 days on the Pacific Ocean in a rubber boat and survived on a diet of candy, vitamins and fresh water from a solar still. The CIC is a research organization funded and manned jointly by the Office of Naval Research and the University of California Medical Center at San Francisco.

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LIFE RAFT 2-2-2

LT George Sigler, USNR, 29, and LT Charles Gore, USNR, 27, left Oakland July 4 on a 15-foot rubber boat equipped only with a small sail, a survival kit of their own design and emergency rations. They were picked up 140 miles northeast of Oahu, Hawaii, August 28 by the U. S. Coast Guard Cutter Cape Corwin.

Sigler and Gore undertook the voyage as a private venture to test survival kits they manufacture for use by castaway mariners, or downed aviators stranded at sea. Both men are Naval Reserve pilots who formerly flew off aircraft carriers in the Pacific area.

Interest in survival at sea began for both Sigler and Gore while flying the A-3 Skywarrior on active duty. Both men at one time or another held the job of Safety/Survival Officer with their respective squadrons and had attended Navy survival schools.

Sigler and Gore now fly one weekend a month as Naval Reservists with Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron 208 and 308 respectively, at Naval Air Station Alameda.

Two days out of Oakland, they surmounted the most dangerous incident of their 2,600-mile voyage when rough seas flipped the boat and they lost part of their equipment and all the emergency rations. George Sigler was asleep when the boat turned over.

LIFE RAFT 3-3-3

"I woke up under water," Sigler said later in an interview at the Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii where the two were undergoing medical tests. "I swallowed a lot of salt water and it later caused me to become sea-sick and dehydrated."

It took Sigler and Gore two hours in chilling waters to get their boat turned right side up and the effort left them exhausted. For the next forty days the two men existed on three pieces of hard candy, one vitamin "C" tablet and 10 to 15 ounces of water daily.

"After that, we had only the water," said Gore, 40 pounds lighter after his ordeal and grinning over a huge lunch tray at Tripler.

The two adventurers had expected to catch fish along the way but attempts to do so ended in failure until just two days before the voyage ended. After 54 days without food suddenly "...there were dolphin all around us," remembered Gore, talking with the crew of the U. S. Coast Guard Cutter Cape Corwin shortly after being picked up. "We tried fishing with hook and line and it took us twenty minutes to land one, and we put two holes in the bottom of the boat doing it. We were totally exhausted by the effort," added Gore.

Sigler later discovered it was much easier to spear the tough fighting fish and flip them into the boat where Gore would rap them over the head.

LIFE RAFT 4-4-4

Navy Lieutenant Commander (Dr.) Peter Lee of the Clinical Investigation Center was on the Coast Guard helicopter that ferried the two intentional castaways from the Cape Corwin to the hospital.

"We were amazed," said Dr. Lee. "After almost two months confined on a small, rubber boat, I didn't really expect them to even be able to walk, but they were in amazingly good shape."

Both men arrived at the hospital 40 pounds lighter and slightly sunburned from a six-hour wait to be picked up but otherwise in excellent condition physically and mentally.

While planning their trip Sigler and Gore approached the staff at the Oak Knoll Naval Hospital in Oakland for advice on fluids and electrolyte physical requirements for such a voyage.

Commander (Dr.) John D. Wallin, Director of the Clinical Investigation Center gave the two basic information on minimum intake requirements of water and salt but advised that such a trip was "extremely hazardous" and cautioned against it.

Sigler and Gore determined to continue their plans and inquired if the Navy would be interested in taking advantage of an opportunity to study the effects of such an extended period of stress on the human metabolism.

LIFE RAFT 5-5-5

Dr. Lee, examining the two men at Tripler Army Medical Center where tests were done over a 72-hour period, remained pleasantly surprised at the condition of the voyagers.

"In many cases," pointed out Lee, "it is extremely difficult to begin normal intake of food after such a long period without. The gastrointestinal track has a lining," explained Lee, "that will dry out and any food taken in after that has a tendency to either pass straight through or result in blockage of the tract. Either way, it isn't good for the patient because he isn't receiving nourishment. In the case of Sigler and Gore, there was no evidence of this at all."

When Sigler and Gore arrived at Tripler, both ordered milk shakes, half and half milk and gingerbread cake and later that night ate sandwiches. Breakfast the next morning before the astonished staff on the ward was pancakes smothered in maple syrup, bacon and eggs, orange juice, coffee and milk.

"All we thought about the whole trip was food," said Sigler. "Every night we dreamed of food. Everything we talked about was related to food."

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LIFE RAFT 6-6-6

The Navy and both voyagers have expressed the hope that their trip and the results of the tests now being evaluated at the Investigation Center in Oakland will result in greater chances for survival at sea for future castaways.

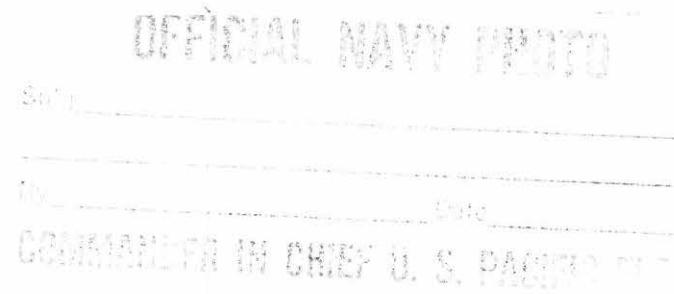
"Neither of us would want to do it again," said Gore to newsmen in Honolulu. "But we set out to prove something... that castaways with simple survival gear can find their way across an ocean, and they can survive. I think we did just that."

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A U.S. Coast Guard helicopter hovers above the cutter Cape Corwin with Charles Gore in the rescue basket.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by J01 Kirby Harrison)





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An hour after being picked up by the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Cape Corwin, Sigler (picture) and Gore were picked up by Coast Guard helicopter and taken to Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu for tests and observation.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by J01 Kirby Harrison)



Gore and Sigler's 15-foot rubber boat "Courageous" is lifted aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Cape Corwin at the end of their 2,600-mile voyage across the Pacific Ocean.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by J01 Kirby Harrison)

UNITED STATES NAVY

COMMANDER IN CHIEF U. S. PACIFIC (CINCPAC)



San Francisco Examiner

2 MEN AGAINST THE PACIFIC

Expressing their dissatisfaction with
the Pacific Gas & Electric Company

2:00 p.m. Sat. 10/10/65

Both Sigler and Gore were amazed with the publicity their exploit had received. "We had hoped to interest people in what we were doing," said Sigler (picture) from his bed at Tripler Army Medical Center, "but it went a lot further than I think either of us expected."

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by J01 Kirby Harrison)

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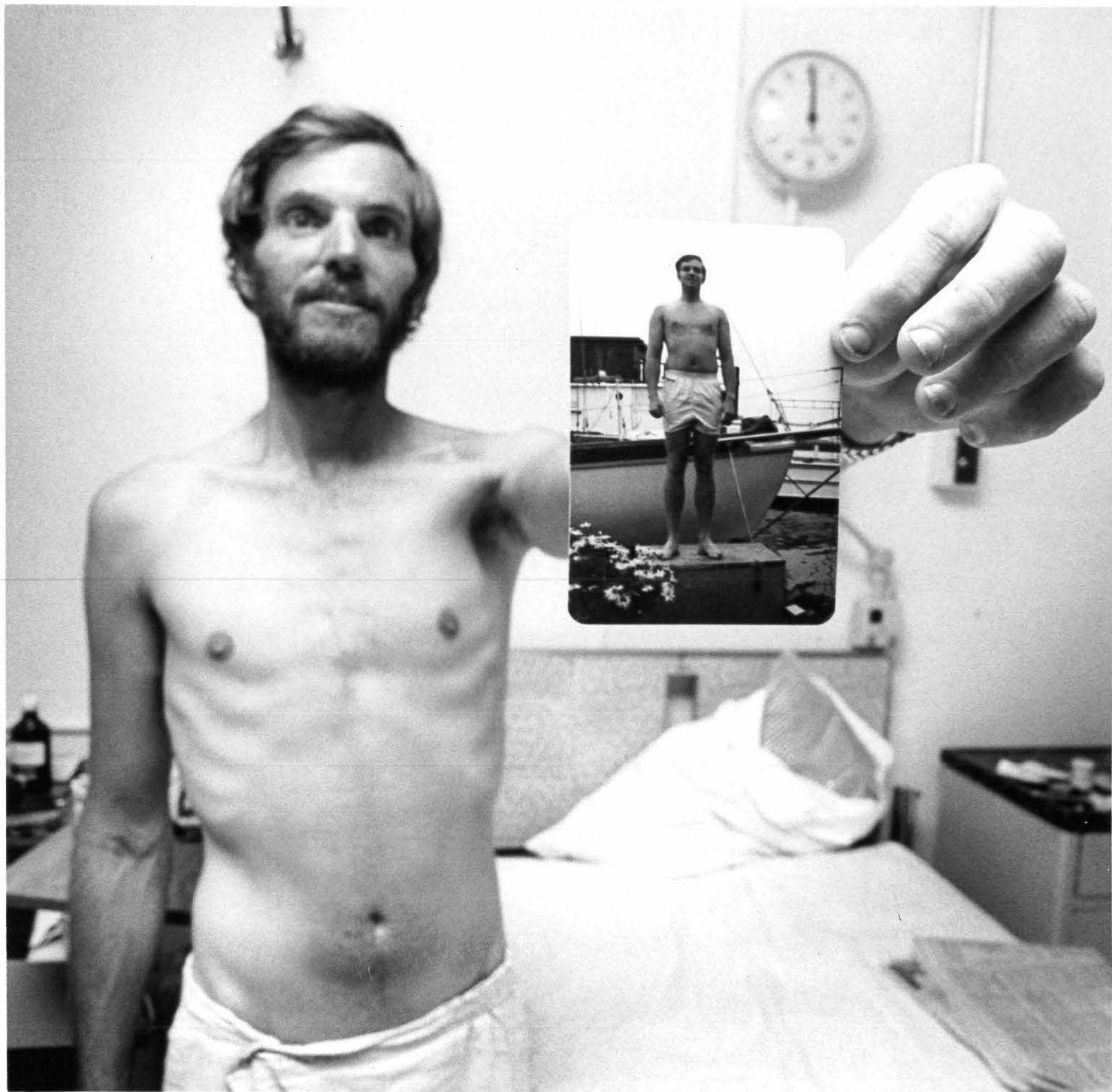
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COMMANDER IN CHIEF U. S. PACIFIC FLEET



Both Sigler and Gore (picture) were X-Rayed extensively at Tripler during the first 72 hours after being picked up by the Coast Guard 140 miles northeast of the island of Oahu. "They were awfully thin," says Tripler X-Ray Technologist Sue Kott (picture), "but other than that, the guys seemed to be feeling great."

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by J01 Kirby Harrison)



Charles Gore had this snapshot taken of himself just prior to leaving Oakland. He and Sigler each lost 40 pounds during their 54-day crossing.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by J01 Kirby Harrison)

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Sigler and Gore were in generally good health considering their 54 days under castaway conditions, but even so both had some difficulty walking and maintaining balance just after their arrival at Tripler where Army doctors watched Gore (picture) attempt to walk in a straight line.

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by J01 Kirby Harrison)

By _____ S. D. _____
COMMANDER IN CHIEF U. S. PACIFIC FLEET



Charles Gore, 27, and George Sigler (29 (rt) spent 54 days in an open rubber boat enroute from Oakland, CA to Hawaii. They not only proved that men can survive the open ocean under extreme castaway conditions, but according to doctor's preliminary tests immediately after the voyage, "they were in excellent health considering what they had been through."

(Official U.S. Navy Photo by JOL Kirby Harrison)